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K-State sees green in its future

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Staff writer

K-State is destined to be a leader in the sustainability movement among higher education institutions in the Midwest, said university leaders involved in laying the groundwork for future "green" endeavors at the fourth annual Dialog on Sustainability Thursday at K-State.

President Kirk Schulz asserted that, as a land-grant university strongly rooted in the earth it rests on, K-State has a tremendous opportunity to lead a state-wide effort to

become more sustainable. He said with the school's wealth of research and young talent invested in the movement, it's only a matter of time the plans currently on paper are actualized and carried out beyond the campus.

"Given our emphasis on practical education, on agriculture and natural resources, land grant schools should be the leaders in the higher education sustainability movement," Schulz said. "We have the tradition, background, expertise and base that will have an impact on the whole area of sustainability."

The first steps have already been taken by committees such as the K-State Sustainability Task Force, Stewardship Committee, Recycling Committee and student organizations such as Students for Environmental Action and Student Sustainability Coalition. The potential of these groups lies in their ability to effectively communicate with the campus and engage others in the plight, said director of sustainability Ben Champion.

"We need to a more collaborative approach," Champion said. "The win-win-win situation we are trying to foster

among the environment, society and the economy won't happen in a vacuum."

Champion is head of the Sustainability Task Force, which was charged with developing recommendations and responsibilities the university can adopt. A report will be released this fall, but a rough draft was revealed at the dialog. Recommendations focused on tapping into student interest by developing curriculum focused on sustainable practices students can use beyond graduation and hosting more on-campus events to raise awareness of the topic.



Staff photo by Jonas Hogg
Ben Champion is head of the Sustainability Task Force at Kansas State University.